

History of

JAMES BIVENCE WHEELER
and
RACHEL TALMAGE
as told by Rachel Free, daughter

Newspaper Clipping 1908

BURGHCLERE

Death of an Old Inhabitant. - There has recently passed away one of the oldest inhabitants of the parish in the person of Henry Talmage, who had reached ripe age of 82. He was a native of Burghclere, and was for a great many years employed as engine driver at Burghclere farm. Although only treading the more humbler paths of life he faithfully served his day and generation in his own particular sphere, and died full of years, having earned the respect of his friends and neighbours. In addition to his ordinary occupation as a machine driver, he was clever at making baskets and beehives and at budding roses. He was a member of the Primitive Methodist Society at Burghclere. He leaves a widow and several children and grandchildren to mourn his loss, and these followed him to the grave when his remains were laid to rest at Burghclere Churchyard on the 18th. by Canon Blunt.

Mother (Rachel Talmage) was the fifth child in a family of ten and spent her youth in a rural community in England. Her father (Henry Talmage, see above newspaper clipping) was a machinist on the estate of the Earl of Kanarva. Her father also was a botanist of some renown. His specialty was flowers and specifically roses. Some of his roses were famous even in America.

Mother (Rachel Talmage) didn't get much schooling as they had to go quite a long ways to get there and of course had to walk. And when they went to class they had to stand til the class was over, and mother

couldn't stand still so long without fainting. Then the teacher would send her home with her brother George to take care of her.

She often spoke of her father taking her to Sunday School and to visit her grandparents, and he always carried her piggy back. Her father loved flowers and especially roses and peonies. When he went through the field he always looked for wild roses that he could use to graft other roses on. He would have many colors on one bush. Friends sent him slips from America and different parts of England. Mother seemed to have been her father's favorite.

I believe it could be said that mother was typically English. The English are very proud of their King and all of the royal family. It was amazing to me how she would follow the lives, loves and happenings of the Princess Elizabeth and the others of royalty. Her stories of life in rural England are extremely interesting. I remember her telling about the bread ovens. The bread for a full week would be cooked in large stone outdoor ovens. Of course, it was impossible to run to the corner grocer and buy a loaf of bread in those days.

When mother was eleven years old she went to Newbury to be a companion to Miss Dibley. Several of her older sisters lived at Dibleys til they were married. There were just Mr. Dibley, the eldest of the family and Miss Dibley, the youngest. They had both been disappointed in love so never married. They were wealthy people. They only used half of the home which consisted of forty-four rooms; the rest of the place was rented part for stores and part to a family. They had a kitchen garden and a flower garden all surrounded by a high brick fence and a large compost pit also made of bricks. In this every bit of waste and leaves were placed to decay and be used on the gardens. They had a gardener who took care of these things. There were fruit trees that were espaliered so the fruit grew on the walls to save space.

The Dibleys loved mother and treated her like their own. Mother started going with father (James B. Wheeler) right after she went to live with the Dibleys. And father never had any other sweetheart. Mother went with some other boys but when they began to get serious she always went back to father. They both came from large families, ten in mother's family and twelve in father's, he being the youngest. He had a good voice both for speaking and singing. He was a very good musician.

He played the cornet and piccolo most. His mother always took him to church with her, and the ladies wore hoop skirts at that time, and he said several times when going up the stairs (he was just a little fellow and his mother would hold his hand) he got covered under the skirts.

He went to school a half a day and to work a half a day til he was eleven years old then he went to work all the time in a foundry where he was a boiler maker. After he finished, the company sent him to Wales for a time. Then he came back to the foundry. He joined a fife and drum band and had to walk three miles to get to practice and went three times a week. That made six miles after a hard day's work. He broke his foot by having some heavy equipment fall on it, and it was never taken care of. So he was lame all his life and had to have a shoe made especially for that foot.

When he was about seventeen years old he heard some Mormon elders preaching and became very much interested. They held their meetings mostly in the homes of friends. Mother took it up too. So did several of his friends, which made their folks very unhappy, because they began planning to go to America.

Mother's father (Henry Talmage) was a very religious man. Every Sunday morning he started out for Sunday School around six o'clock. Guess he had quite a ways to walk. He put in the whole day going to meetings. Then in the evening he would go and preach for the Salvation Army.

Father's mother (Esther Bivins) belonged to the Church of England. Mother's father belonged to some other religion. I don't suppose they would have been so upset over my parents joining the Mormons if they had stayed in England. Buy they didn't want them to come to America.

Mr. Dibley died while mother was still with them. Miss Dibley had some sisters and one was Lady Achers. And there were children so she wouldn't be all alone. Miss Dibley and mother used to go to Yarmouth to the seaside every summer. Once while there the Prince of Wales was there, and he was having a big time. Mother passed him on the sidewalk one day and winked at him. He stopped and told her her eyes would be the ruination of her someday.

Miss Dibley offered mother and father every kind of inducement for them to stay there in England: offered to give mother part of her estate,

and they could live in the home with her, having their own quarters. But they just had to come to America. They saved until they had enough to pay their way. Father converted three of his chums, so they decided to come with them. They came on the "Nevada" in 1883.

CHURCH CHRONOLOGY by Andrew Jensen, page 113. August 1883
Wed. 29 - The steamship Nevada sailed from Liverpool, England,
with 682 Saints, including 29 returning missionaries, in charge of
Peter F. Goss. The company arrived at New York Sept. 7th, and at
Salt Lake City Sept. 17th.

The missionaries had assured the boys that they would have no trouble finding work in their trades. Mother was seasick all the way across, and they encountered a bad storm and were thrown off their course for three days. The boys didn't get sea sick. But when they landed and got on the train they were all sick and were glad when the journey was over. Of course, they were very much disappointed when they got to Salt Lake City. Dad was the youngest of the four, but he was also the leader. They all depended on him. And they had to go to work at anything they could get. Two of the boys were carpenters and the other a carriage maker. Dad being a mechanic had the hardest time and just got odd jobs. Then he got a chance to go to the iron mine and work, but they had just paid them in script, and they had to go to the tithing office and get what they could.

Mother went to work for a family as a hired girl and never worked so hard before in her life. She had brought lots of clothes with her and the women were always borrowing some of them. And they didn't pay her. When the boss of the iron mine was making a trip to Salt Lake Dad decided to go with him as he hadn't heard anything from mother and was anxious about her. And he made up his mind that they would get married. He thought she would have saved some money which, of course, she hadn't. Anyway they decided they wouldn't be apart any more as mother was being pressured to go into polygamy. They were married on the 7th of April in 1885. They went to Beaver where they all got work at the Woolen Mills. All but Charlie Mossdale, he stayed in Iron County where he married and raised a large family.

Father (James Bivence Wheeler) seldom talked of his family. The only two he mentioned often were his brother Tom and his sister Ellen who was a nurse. Tom wrote in late years and wanted to come and live with his brother and family, but mother didn't feel that they could afford it. And also she felt that since he was in his later years, and she had not been too happy in her first years in the new land that Tom would not be happy here. It was true that the family didn't have very much. They lived at Highland still - otherwise known as Wheeler's Ranch.

James Bivence Wheeler was born October 22, 1863, at No. 1 Prospect Place, Newbury Berks, England. He was baptized February 7, 1881. He was married to Rachel Talmage in Salt Lake City, April 7, 1885, by Bishop Thomas Taylor and they were endowed in the Manti Temple by Daniel H. Wells, February 5, 1890. He migrated from Beaver, Utah to Pioche, Nevada, February 14, 1889.

Rachel Talmage Wheeler was born November 6, 1862 in Burghclere Hamp., England. She was a convert to Mormonism in the year 1881, and immigrated from Liverpool, England in 1883. Upon arrival in Salt Lake City, Utah she worked for Mrs. Charles Crismon and later Mrs. N. C. Morris. Their children were:

Rachel Dibley Wheeler Free: born Beaver, Ut., Jan. 31, 1886

Esther Jane Wheeler Deck: born Beaver, Ut., Dec 13, 1888

James Talmage Wheeler: born Beaver, Ut., Sept 1891, died Sept 1892

Cassey Lena Wheeler: born Pioche, Nev., Aug 16, 1892

James Henry Wheeler: born Pioche, Nev., Sept 15, 1894

Leah Elizabeth Wheeler: born Pioche, Nev., Dec 14, 1896

Juanita Clara Wheeler: born Pioche, Nev., July 3, 1898

Priscilla Chrstitina Wheeler: born Pioche, Nev., July 24, 1905

Newspaper Clipping 1940. Salt Lake City.

JAMES B. WHEELER BURIED IN PANACA

Respecter Citizen Died Following Operation. Was Active in Mining in Pioche District. Large Funeral -

Mr. James Bevins Wheeler, one of the highly respected citizens of Pioche was buried at Panaca Friday afternoon.

Ms. Wheeler was operated on at the LDS hospital in Salt Lake City a couple of weeks ago and after the operation he was doing nicely and it was thought that his recovery was only a matter time, but he took a turn for the worse and Thursday word was received that he had passed away.

Mr. Wheeler was born in Newbury, Berkshire, England in 1863 October 22nd. He joined the Mormon Church when he was 18 years old, along with five other young folks, one of whom was Rachel Talmage, later she became his wife and to this union eight children were born. One son died in infancy.

After residing in Salt Lake for some time they moved to Beaver, Utah where they bought a home and resided there for several years. In 1889 Mr. Wheeler came to Pioche where he accepted a position with the old Raymond Ely Mining Company, as master mechanic, machinist and boiler maker, which were the trades he had learned in the old country. This position he held for several years finally moving to Highland in 1896 where the family has lived since that time. At Highland he built a five stamp mill and treated ores from the local mines, with some success, engaged in the cattle business for some time, became interested in mining and was president and general manager of the Black Prince Mining Company at the time of his death.

Mr. Wheeler died at the LDS hospital in Salt Lake City, April 3rd, after a two weeks illness. Undergoing a major operation and contracting pneumonia. A daughter, Mrs. W. A. Free, and James H. Wheeler, the only son, were in Salt Lake at the time of his death and the body was accompanied to Caliente by his son Jas. H. Wheeler.